

STATE REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 47B
MELISSA HORTMAN

**CONSERVATION
UPDATE**



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On April 22nd, I joined hundreds of Minnesotans for the annual Ducks and Wetlands rally on the grounds of the State Capitol. As we saw that day, there is strong support in our state for protecting our wildlife habitat and restoring our impaired waters. I come from a family of hunters, and am a strong advocate for protecting our water for fishing, drinking and recreation.

After years of declining investments in habitat and clean water, there is growing concern that our rich natural resources are being depleted, putting our heritage of hunting, fishing and healthy living at risk. To address this concern, there is new support at the state legislature for a dedicated funding source to protect our natural resources. This dedicated funding also has the support of hunters, anglers and environmentalists.

This week, I voted with a majority of members in the Minnesota House of Representatives to pass a bill that would create this dedicated funding source for hunting, fishing, water, parks and the arts. If passed, a constitutional amendment will be put on the ballot in November, leaving final passage up to the voters.

The House bill calls for 3/16 of one percent of the present state sales tax, allocating \$135 million per year to be used in this manner:

- 60% to fish, wildlife and habitat
- 30% to clean up polluted water
- 5% to parks, trails and zoos
- 5% to arts, humanities and public broadcasting

The companion bill in the Senate calls for a sales tax increase of 3/8 of one percent, allocating \$276.9 million per year in sales tax to be used in this manner:

- 34% to fish and wildlife habitat
- 22% to clean up impaired water
- 22% to parks, trails and zoos
- 22% to arts, humanities and public broadcasting

The bill will now move to a joint House and Senate Conference Committee, where a compromise bill will be negotiated. I look forward to voting for a good final bill, one that will protect our rich history of clean lakes, healthy habitat and a flourishing sportsman community.



Rep. Melissa Hortman speaks with attendees at the Wetlands Rally

HUNTING AND FISHING CALENDAR

(Courtesy: Minnesota DNR)

Fishing

01/01/06 – 03/31/06	Lake trout fishing – winter season (within BWCAW)
01/14/06 – 03/15/06	Lake trout fishing – winter season (outside BWCAW)
04/01/06	Stream trout fishing – southeast streams open to catch and release
04/15/06	Stream trout fishing – opener
05/13/06 - 05/14/06	Take-a-Mom fishing weekend
05/13/06 - 10/31/06	Lake trout fishing - statewide summer season
05/13/06	Walleye, sauger, northern pike fishing - statewide opener
05/27/06	Bass fishing - opener

Hunting

10/29/05 – 05/15/06	Furbearer – beaver season (north zone)
03/01/06 – 03/31/06	Crow hunt – first season
04/12/06	Wild turkey hunt – spring opener
05/05/06	Bear hunt – application deadline
06/16/06	Moose hunt – application deadline

Fishing season is right around the corner. With that in mind, the DNR has published a new pamphlet on fishing rules for 2006. You can get it online at www.dnr.state.mn.us/regulations/fishing/index.html or by calling the DNR at 1-888-MINNDNR.